

## Interagency Council on Affordable Housing

Tuesday, December 3, 2013

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Lyceum

227 Lawrence Street

Hartford, Connecticut

**Members Present:** Anne Foley (Chair), Sarah Petela for Lisa Tepper Bates (Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness), Eric Chatman (Connecticut Housing Finance Authority), Rebecca Fleming (Department of Correction), Kate Forcier (Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials), Daisy Franklin (Council Appointee), Barbara Geller (Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services), Josh Scalora for Commissioner Terrence Macy (Department of Developmental Services), Joseph Martel (Council Appointee), Commissioner Edith Prague (State Department on Aging), Sarah Ratchford (Council Appointee), Howard Rifkin (Partnership for Strong Communities), Kim Somaroo-Rodriquez (Department of Children and Families), and Louis Tallarita (State Department of Education).

**Additional Participants:** Commissioner Evonne Klein (Department of Housing)

### I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was convened at 9:05 a.m. The Chair welcomed members and introduced Louis Tallarita, the new designee for the State Department of Education. The Chair also noted two substitutes for Council members that were present: Joshua Scalora for Commissioner Terrence Macy and Sarah Petela for Lisa Tepper Bates.

### II. Approval of the October 8, 2013 Meeting Minutes

The Chair announced that the draft [minutes](#) from the October 8, 2013 meeting were e-mailed to the Council and that a copy of the minutes was located in their meeting packet. Howard Rifkin moved to approve the minutes and the motion was seconded by Daisy Franklin. The Council approved the minutes unanimously on a voice vote.

### III. Department of Housing Update - Commissioner Klein

Commissioner Evonne Klein gave a detailed update on the recent activities of the Department of Housing (DOH) and noted the continuance of outreach efforts to municipal chief elected officials. Commissioner Klein's update included data on the

progress the Department has made in unit creation and construction and funding disbursement over the past year compared with the previous year:

- Since January 1, 2013, DOH had disbursed over \$46 million in funds for projects that have total development costs of more than \$203 million. DOH expects to fund four more projects at \$10.5 million over the next couple of weeks, with total development costs of almost \$60 million.
- Since January 1, 2013, DOH has completed 1,112 units and expects a total of 1,288 units to be completed by the end of the year. This is an increase over 2012, in which 1,162 units were completed.
- In addition, since January 1, 2013, DOH has executed contracts to begin the construction or rehabilitation of 2,618 units. DOH plans to add over 300 units to that number by the end of December.
- On December 16<sup>th</sup>, CHAMP IV applications are due.
- Sandy Disaster Relief funding applications are currently coming in and payments are anticipated to go out soon. In all, over 700 applications are in the pipeline.
- DOH has a staff of thirty, with seven openings for permanent positions. So far, the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) has approved DOH to fill four of those seven openings. The Department also has fourteen Sandy Disaster Relief Program staff, and two vacant positions are in process of being filled.

Commissioner Prague asked about the potential to fund generators for affordable housing units. Commissioner Klein stated she was also interested in this issue and would be looking into its feasibility.

Howard Rifkin explained a rising national trend of large corporations purchasing multiple foreclosed homes, renting them, and then selling bonds backed by the securitized rental payments. Eric Chatman and Commissioner Klein both stated that they did not have knowledge of this kind of practice on a wide scale basis in Connecticut.

#### **IV. Brief Updates**

##### **a. CHFA Affordable Housing Market Inventory Study – Eric Chatman**

Eric Chatman gave a high-level [presentation](#) on the [summary of findings](#) from the CHFA Affordable Housing Market Inventory Study. The presentation included an overview of the study's methodology, as well as the limitations of the data. The study

determined that unmet need for CHFA programs was approximately 91,000 units: 48,000 of these units were potential single-family homeownership units for households earning between 80% and 120% AMI and 43,000 of these units were rental units for households earning below 80% AMI. The Chair asked Eric Chatman to make the full report available to the Council.

Kate Forcier asked if CHFA would attempt to determine town-level AMI data, as recommended by the consultants who produced the report. Eric Chatman said it may be cost-prohibitive to obtain this data, but that the idea was under consideration. Kate Forcier also asked for clarification from CHFA staff about the housing needs in Mansfield.

Howard Rifkin noted the importance of comparing the CHFA Housing Market Inventory Study to the needs assessment conducted by the Council. The Chair stated that this comparison would be completed by Council staff.

Daisy Franklin asked about the availability of CHFA homeownership programs for extremely low income households, below 30% AMI. Eric Chatman explained that CHFA had previously explored the possibility of a pilot program for low-income households and it was found that even with CHFA financing assistance, mortgages were still not affordable.

Commissioner Prague asked about the availability of congregate care housing in the state. It was noted that Governor Malloy has made capital investments for these types of housing.

## **V. 2013 Council Workplan**

### **a. Updated document: barriers to effective housing delivery systems**

The Chair asked the Council to review the [updated document](#) that outlines the barriers to effective housing delivery systems. Kate Forcier identified that the “housing authority capacity” barrier should be expanded to include the lack of ability of housing authorities to provide needed support services to individuals with mental disabilities or the elderly.

Louis Tallarita initiated a discussion on including a new category of barriers that addressed the economic security challenges that individuals and families face when trying to obtain affordable housing. The Council agreed to add this category and identified the following barriers for inclusion in the document: lack of credit, utility

and personal debt, prior history of evictions, criminal background, lack of financial literacy, and domestic violence issues.

**b. Analysis of effectiveness of state housing delivery systems**

The Chair reviewed the populated [matrix](#) with the Council and informed them that it would be completed and updated as new data was obtained. Commissioner Klein supported the idea of completing the analysis in order to inform the Department on how they can improve their programs and service delivery. The Chair informed the Council this analysis would be continued in the 2014 work plan.

**c. Strategies and recommendations to improve the efficacy of existing state housing programs and address barriers to an effective housing delivery system**

The Chair reviewed a list of [draft strategies and recommendations](#) developed based on the Council's identified barriers. The Chair informed the Council that the final strategies and recommendations would be explained in more detail. Major points of discussion in each category of barriers are listed below:

Local Barriers

- *Recommendation #2:* Adjust the wording of the strategy in order to demonstrate the work currently being accomplished by the Incentive Housing Zones program.
- *Recommendation #4:* Ensure that the additional information on this strategy includes details on the envisioned coordinated and proactive nature of this outreach.

Financing Barriers

- *Recommendation #6:* Expand the review of predevelopment resources to all other resources that are potentially underutilized, such as tax increment financing (TIF), tax credits, brownfields funding, etc.
- *NEW:* Open intake to the Elderly/Disabled Rental Rebate program to the extent feasible.
- *NEW:* Target funding for veterans and very low-income households in a future DOH funding round.

- *NEW*: Make additional resources for rapid re-housing available to the extent feasible.

*NEW*: Individual and Family Economic Security Barriers

- Improve coordination between housing authorities and local mental health authorities and provide technical assistance to housing authorities to improve the quality of life for residents.
- Promote opportunities for school students to receive instruction in personal finance or financial literacy before graduation.
- Educate landlords about the Section 8 program and property management.
- Expand the Frequent Users Systems Engagement (FUSE) program to the extent feasible.
- Collaborate with Connecticut's federal delegation and others to promote and encourage the restoration of federal funding to assistance programs such as Section 8 and SNAP.
- Increase awareness of the homeless youth population and continue to evaluate the extent of this problem in the state.
- Support the use of Individual Development Account (IDA) Initiative to facilitate self-sufficiency and economic stability through financial education and asset development.

**VI. Next Steps**

**a. 2013 Annual Report**

Council members agreed to submit an annual report in January to the Governor and the Appropriations, Housing, and Human Services committees of the General Assembly

**b. 2014 Council Work Plan**

The Chair briefly reviewed the draft [2014 Council Work Plan](#) with the Council. Eric Chatman stated that he would be ready to give a presentation on the 2014 Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) at the next meeting.

**c. Upcoming Meetings**

**-Tuesday, January 7, 2014 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**-Thursday morning, January 30, 2014, time TBD**

The Chair reminded everyone of the next scheduled meetings. Eric Chatman and Commissioner Klein will further discuss whether to change the date of the joint meeting to Thursday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Daisy Franklin extended an invitation to Council members to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual International Human Rights Day in Norwalk, which will include a short presentation by Lisa Tepper Bates on the international rights to housing and its local implication. The event will be held Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at the City Hall Atrium in Norwalk.

## **VII. Adjournment**

The Council adjourned at 11:00 a.m.